



**MARVEL**

ISSUE

**23**

WOOD  
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ABURTOV

ULTIMATE COMICS™

**X-MEN®**



**LIVING IN A WORLD  
WHERE MUTANTS ARE  
HATED AND FEARED MORE  
THAN EVER, ONE GROUP  
OF YOUNG HEROES HAS  
BANDED TOGETHER TO  
FIGHT BACK.**

# **ULTIMATE COMICS X-MEN**



## **PREVIOUSLY:**

Under Kitty Pryde's leadership, the war against mutants has ended. The government offered them a treatment to become human. The remaining mutants were relocated to a reservation: Utopia. Among these mutants is Ororo Munroe, known as Storm.

But before Utopia, when the war between the government and the mutants raged on, Storm was a prisoner at Camp Angel, a military-run mutant detention center. Storm, along with Piotr Rasputin, known as Colossus, managed to break free. But there were casualties.

In the struggle, Piotr executed a human officer in cold blood.

This is the story of what happened next.

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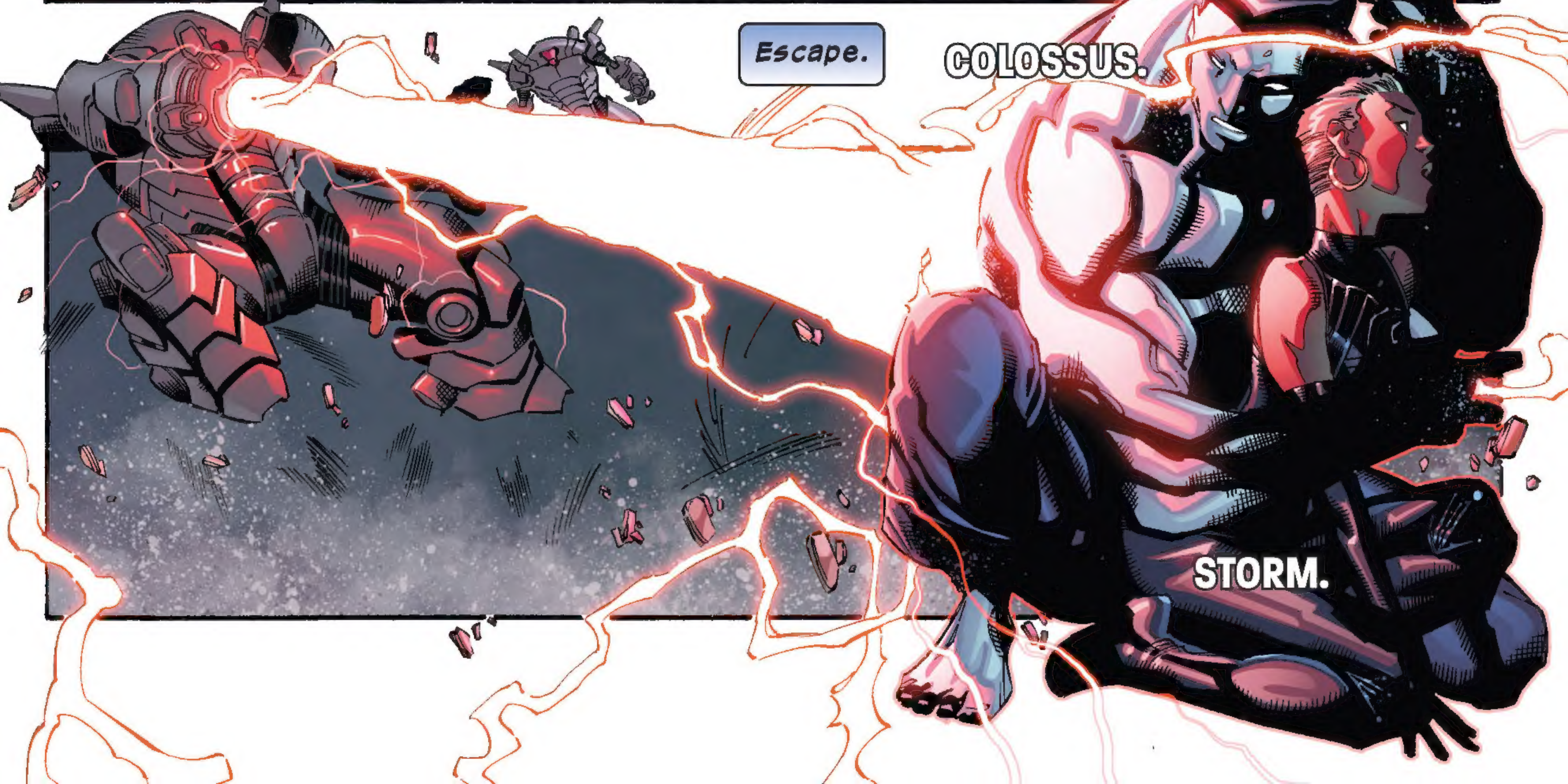
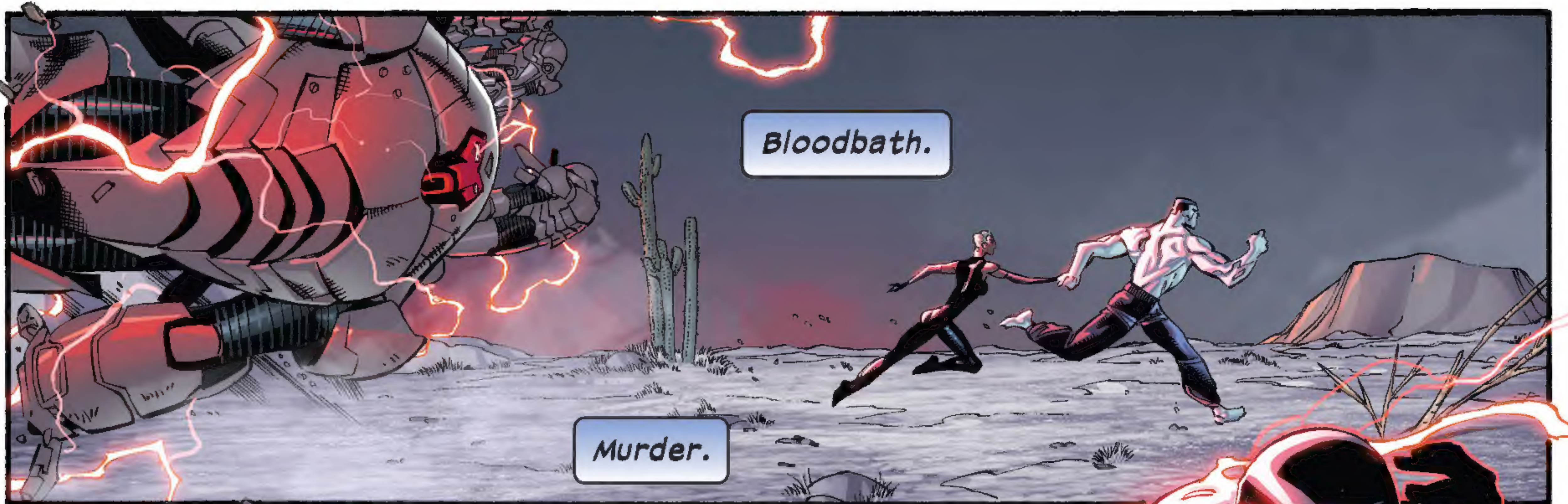
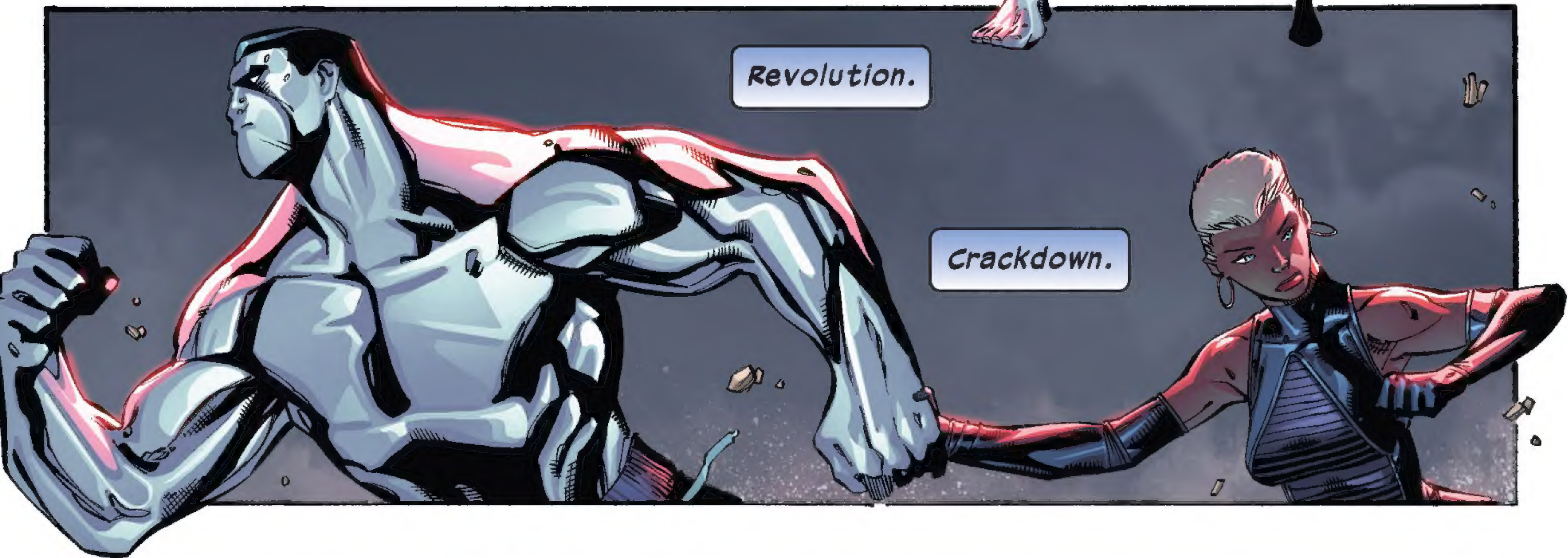
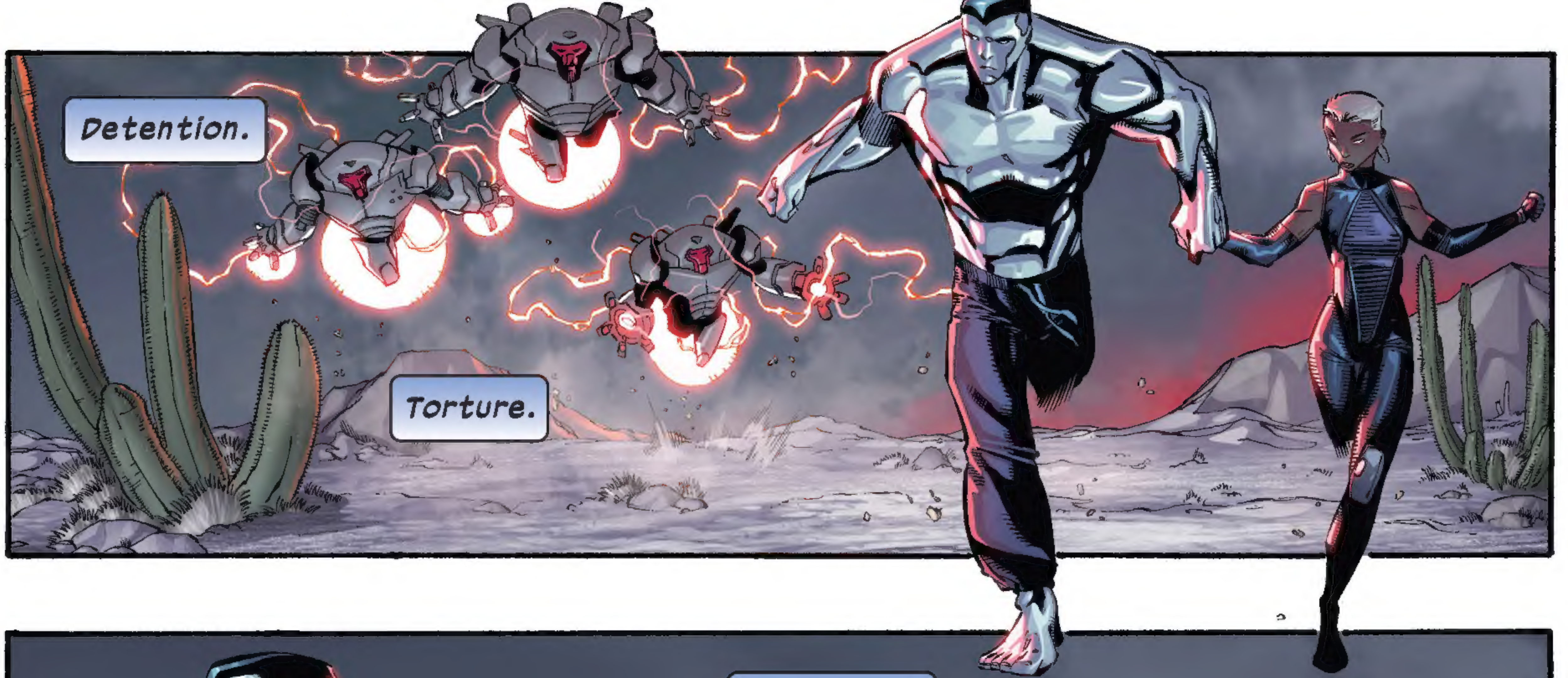
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So where were you  
when the mutants  
rose up?



**STORMFRONT**  
WOOD/BARBER/HO/ABURTOV



## THE ROCKIES.

THREE WEEKS AFTER THE  
FALL OF CAMP ANGEL.

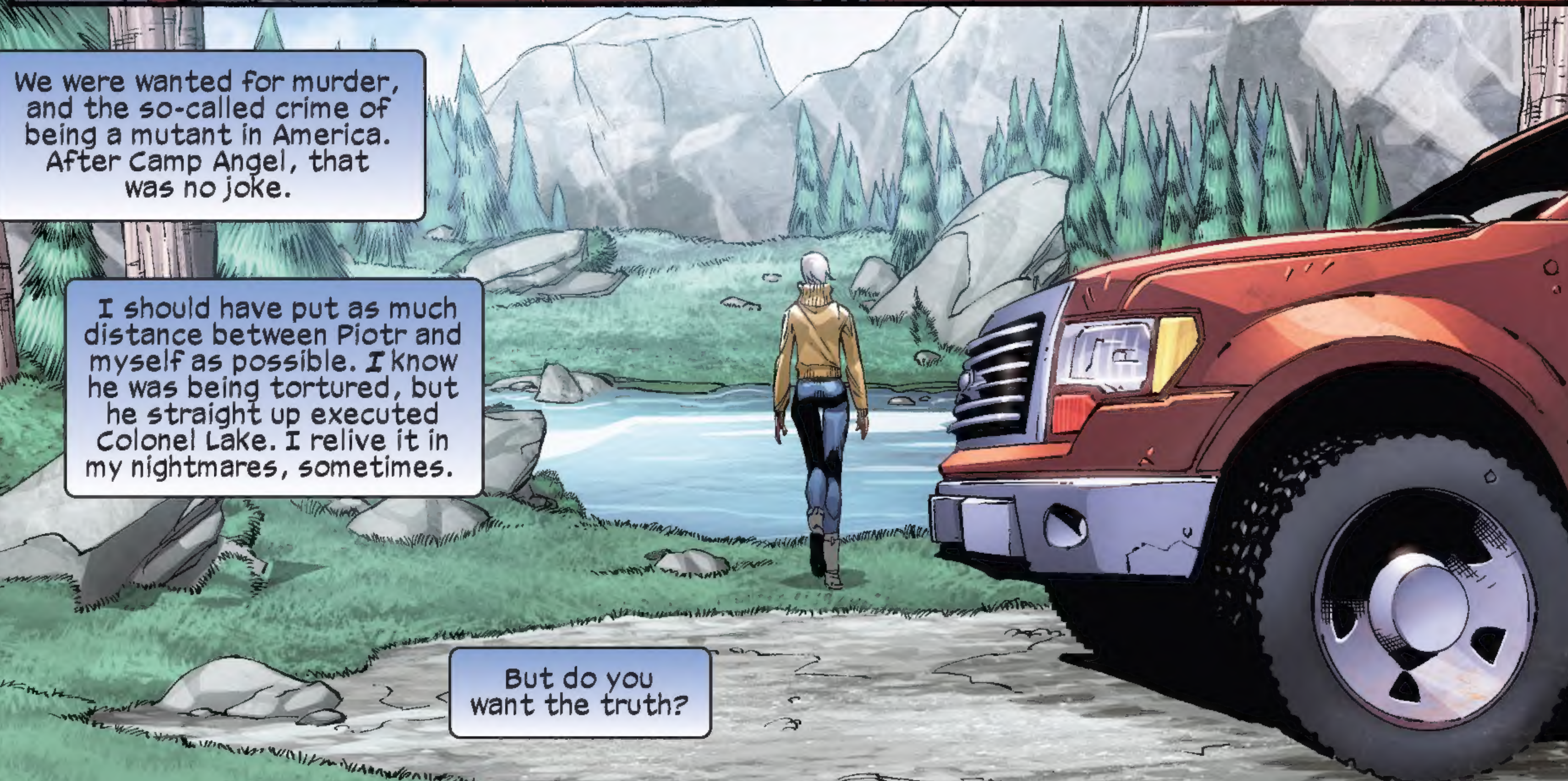


We ran and ran and ran until the landscape changed and the weather turned. I stole the truck, and Colossus drove us deeper into the mountains.



For weeks we've lived in the wilderness, changing locations every couple days, avoiding the hiking trails, monitoring the park rangers, and staying under heavy tree canopy.

Like I know about the mountains. But Piotr did.



We were wanted for murder, and the so-called crime of being a mutant in America. After Camp Angel, that was no joke.

I should have put as much distance between Piotr and myself as possible. I know he was being tortured, but he straight up executed Colonel Lake. I relive it in my nightmares, sometimes.

But do you want the truth?



I loved my time  
in the mountains  
with Piotr.

Quiet,  
Ororo, you'll  
scare the  
fish.



Despite what  
he did.



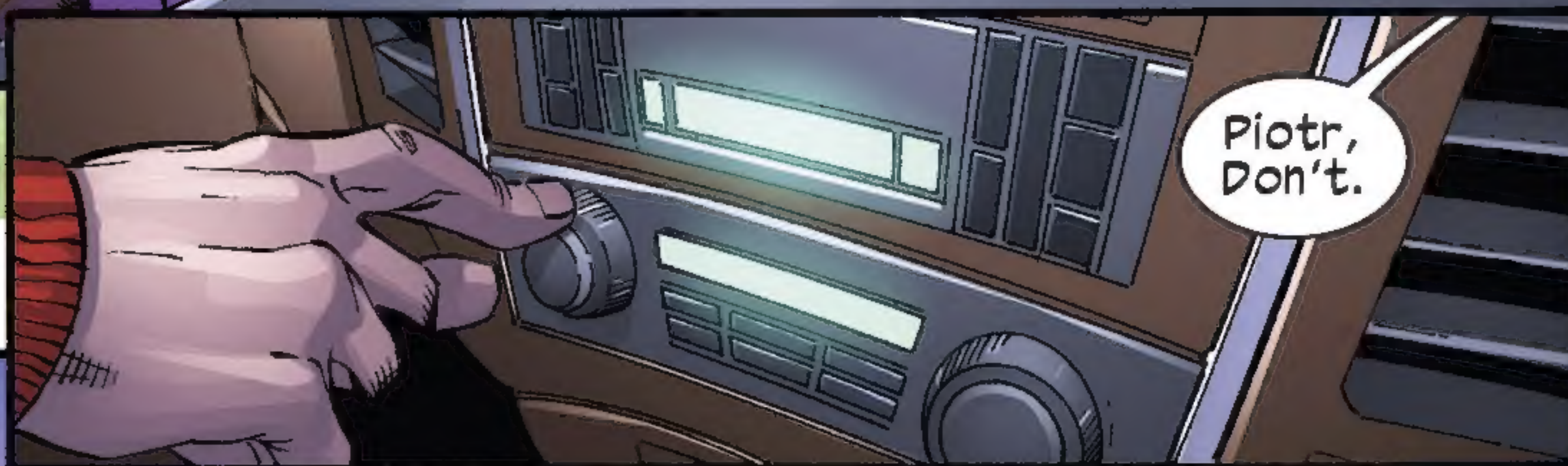
Out here, the horrors of  
the camp felt far away.  
Like a dream, maybe, or  
something in a book you  
might have once read.

I know what you'll  
say: *denial*, Ororo,  
*denial*.



But it was just so easy  
to forget the rest of  
the world existed.





Piotr,  
Don't.

Please.

We should  
find some news,  
maybe something's  
changed?

Nothing's  
changed. There's  
nothing out there  
for us.

Our  
*friends* are  
out there.

We just have  
to hope they're safe.  
We won't help them by  
getting picked up by  
the cops and tossed  
back in jail.

And you can bet the  
"social experiment" that  
was Camp Angel won't  
happen again. It'll be more  
like *Gitmo*. Total black  
bag, vanish off the face  
of the earth thing.

But the news  
won't tell you any of  
that. So why bother  
listening to lies?



LATER.

Did I feel guilt? Maybe. I've been running with the X-Men for a long time, and Piotr was right: I have a lot of friends out there.

But there's no sense of community with the mutants these days, no unifying identity or purpose.

What does it mean to be a mutant, anyway? We used to be *proud* of being born this way.

Now we know it was all a deliberate manipulation. Where's the pride in *that*?

We're all scared. It's falling apart. No shared future, just a bunch of kids scared to come out of hiding.

This can't be our life.

Why not?





Ororo.

Please.  
I am your  
friend.

This is your  
fantasy, your  
delusion.

We are hiding  
in these woods like  
criminals.

I am  
a criminal!  
This is not a  
vacation.

Piotr...



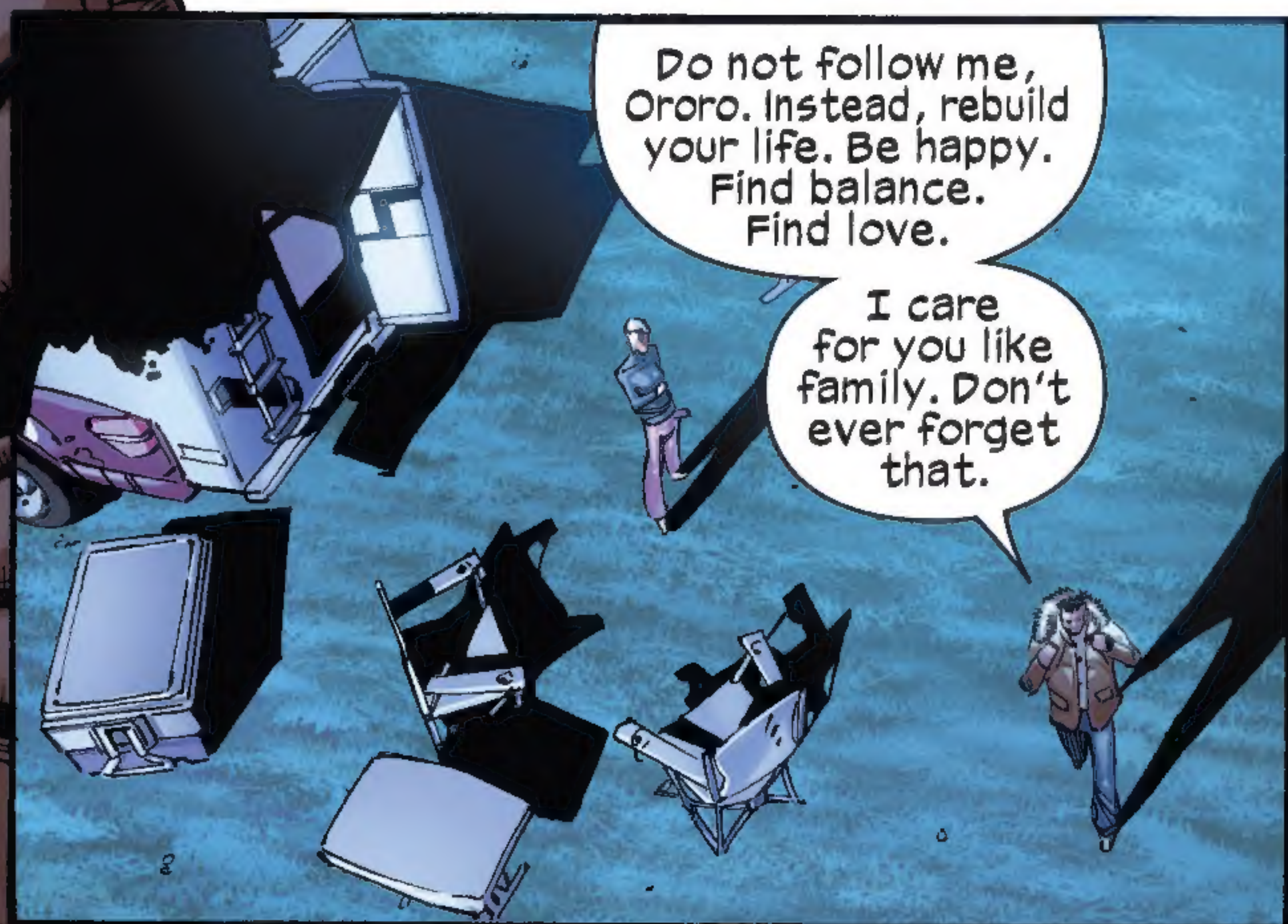
When you  
look at me  
like that...

...it only  
hurts.



Where  
are you  
going?

Away.



Do not follow me,  
Ororo. Instead, rebuild  
your life. Be happy.  
Find balance.  
Find love.

I care  
for you like  
family. Don't  
ever forget  
that.





DAYS LATER.

Okay, I admit I didn't take that too well.

But after the self-pity session, I got my head together, packed for two weeks of walking, and hiked out of the mountains.

That much solitude and silence does wonders. You'll end up hating yourself in new and interesting ways.

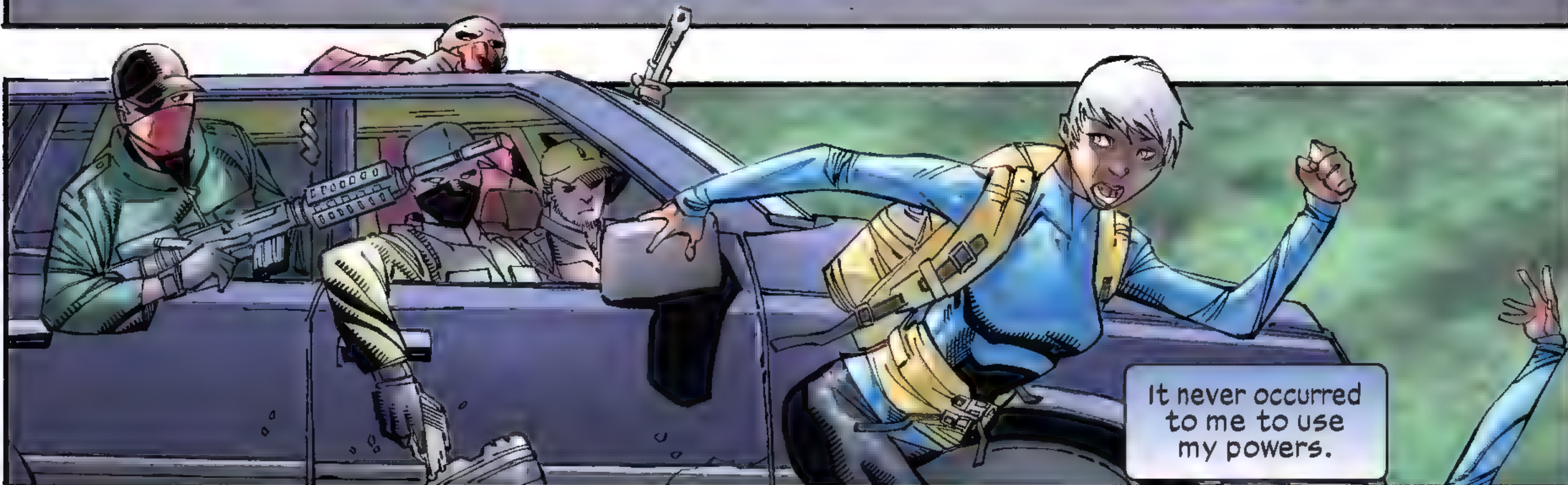
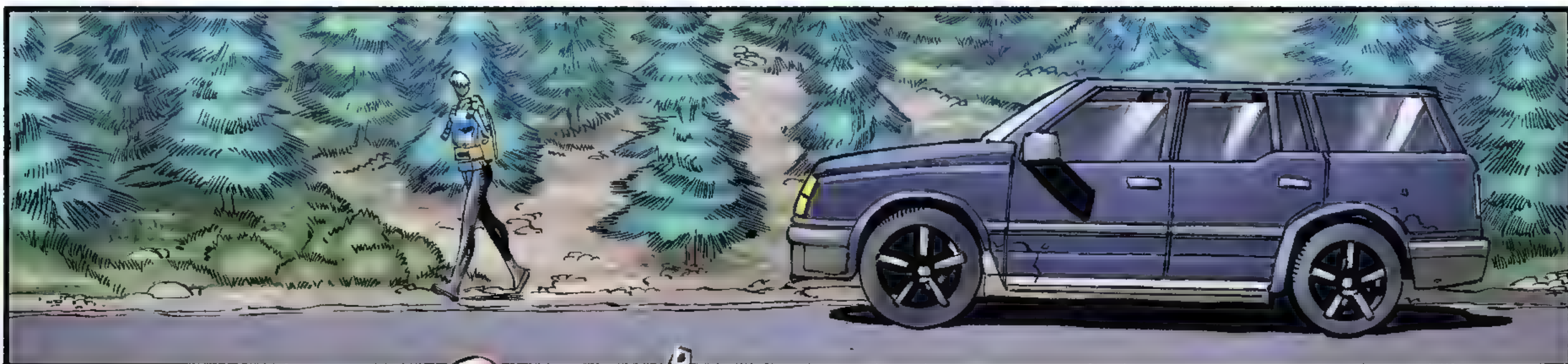
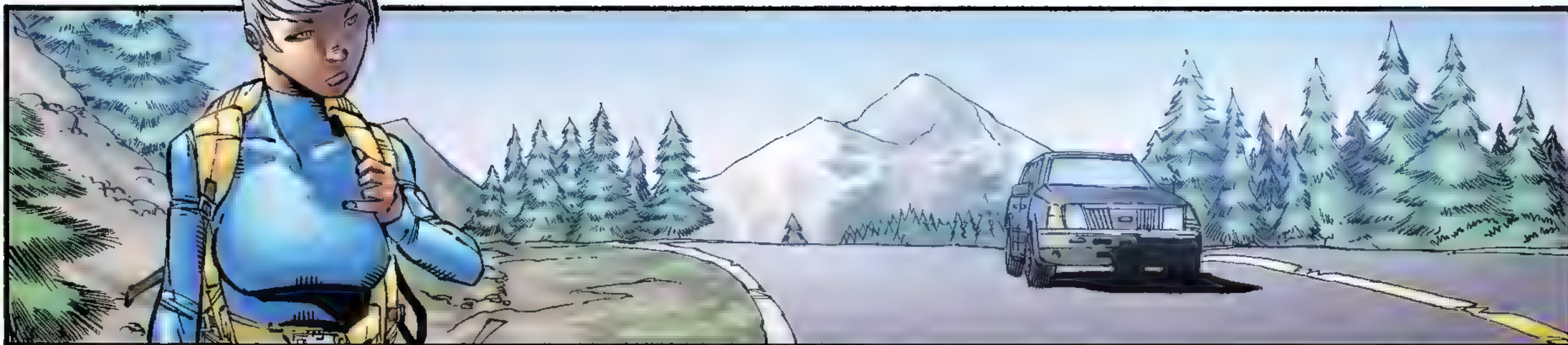
But the scales will fall from those eyes.

I felt like a new woman. And after thoroughly embarrassing myself with Piotr...

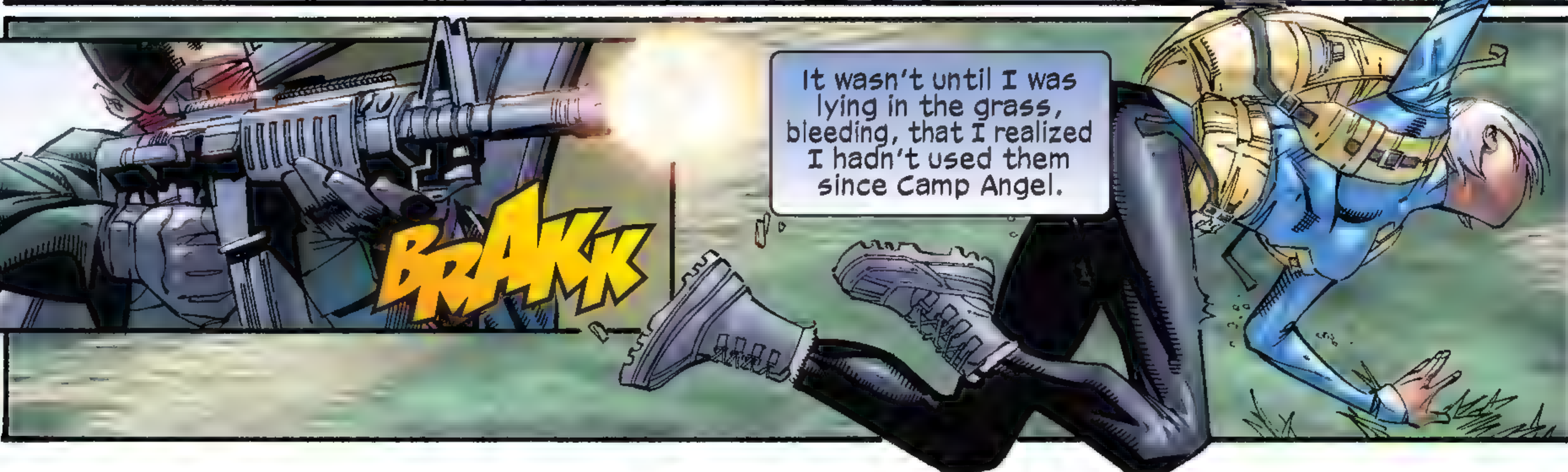
...I was ready to start thinking like an X-Man again. Whatever that meant these days. The point is, I was ready.



Or so I thought.

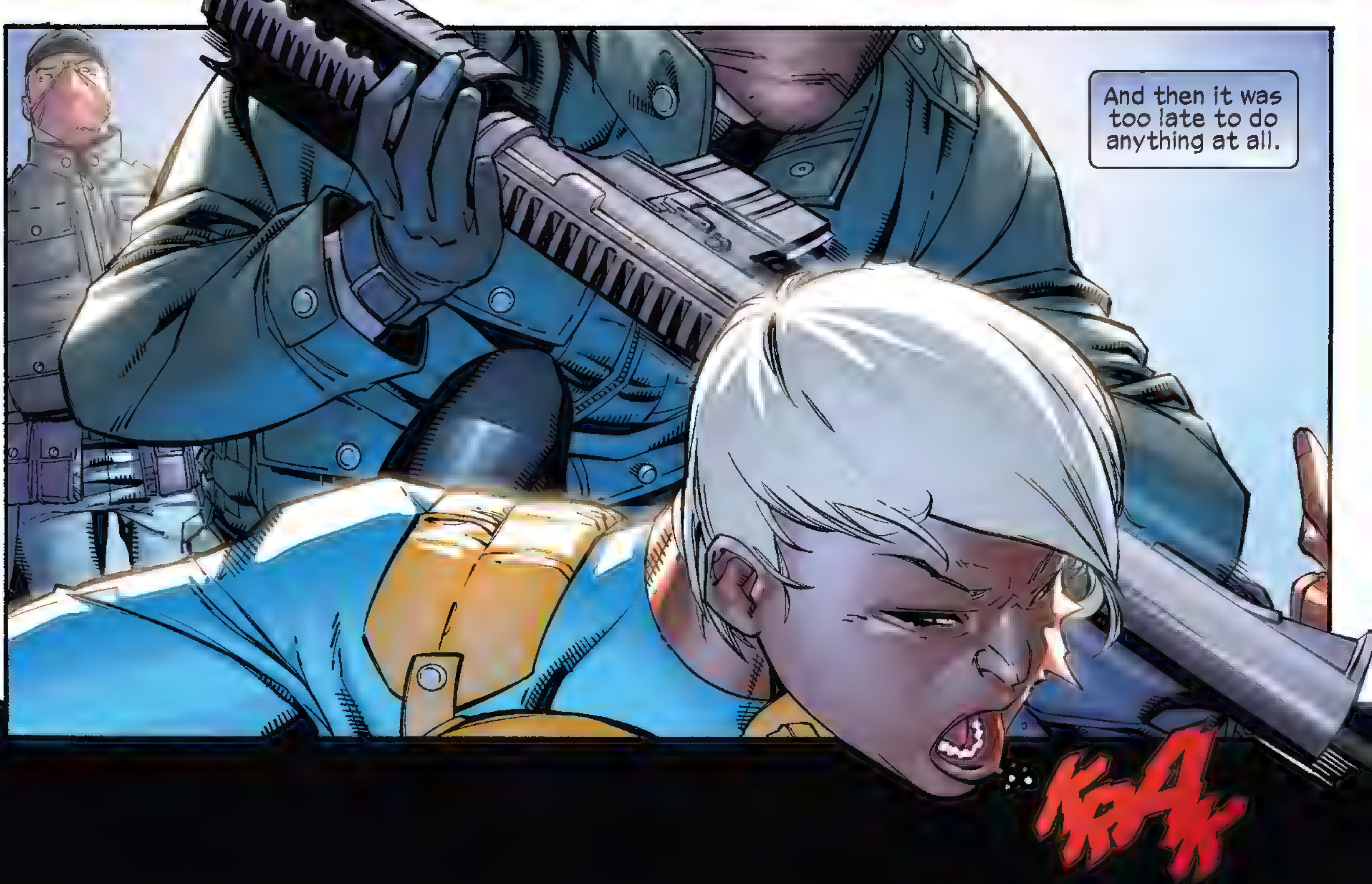


It never occurred to me to use my powers.

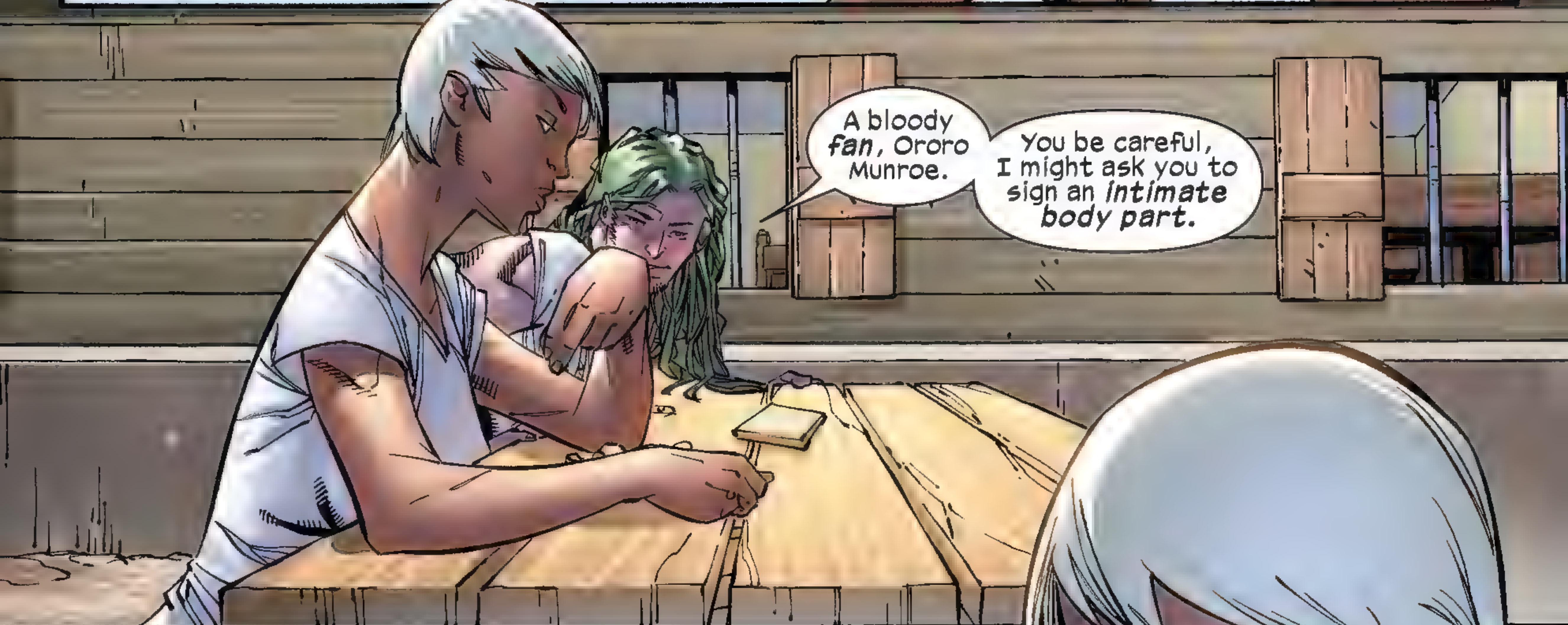


It wasn't until I was lying in the grass, bleeding, that I realized I hadn't used them since Camp Angel.











WEEKS LATER.

Then one day,  
liberation came.

This  
is it.

This is  
where we join  
Kitty Pryde.

She's a *myth*,  
Blackheath. The  
stories are bogus,  
no one but you  
believes them.

I've never  
seen so many  
Sentinels!



Camp 14, twenty  
miles southwest of  
us. Mutants took it  
over, and a few more  
like it. I heard the  
guards talking.

She's *real*,  
and she's taking  
the fight to the  
enemy.

There's  
*no way* that's  
Kitty Pryde  
doing that.

Kitty's  
a *child*, not a  
revolutionary.

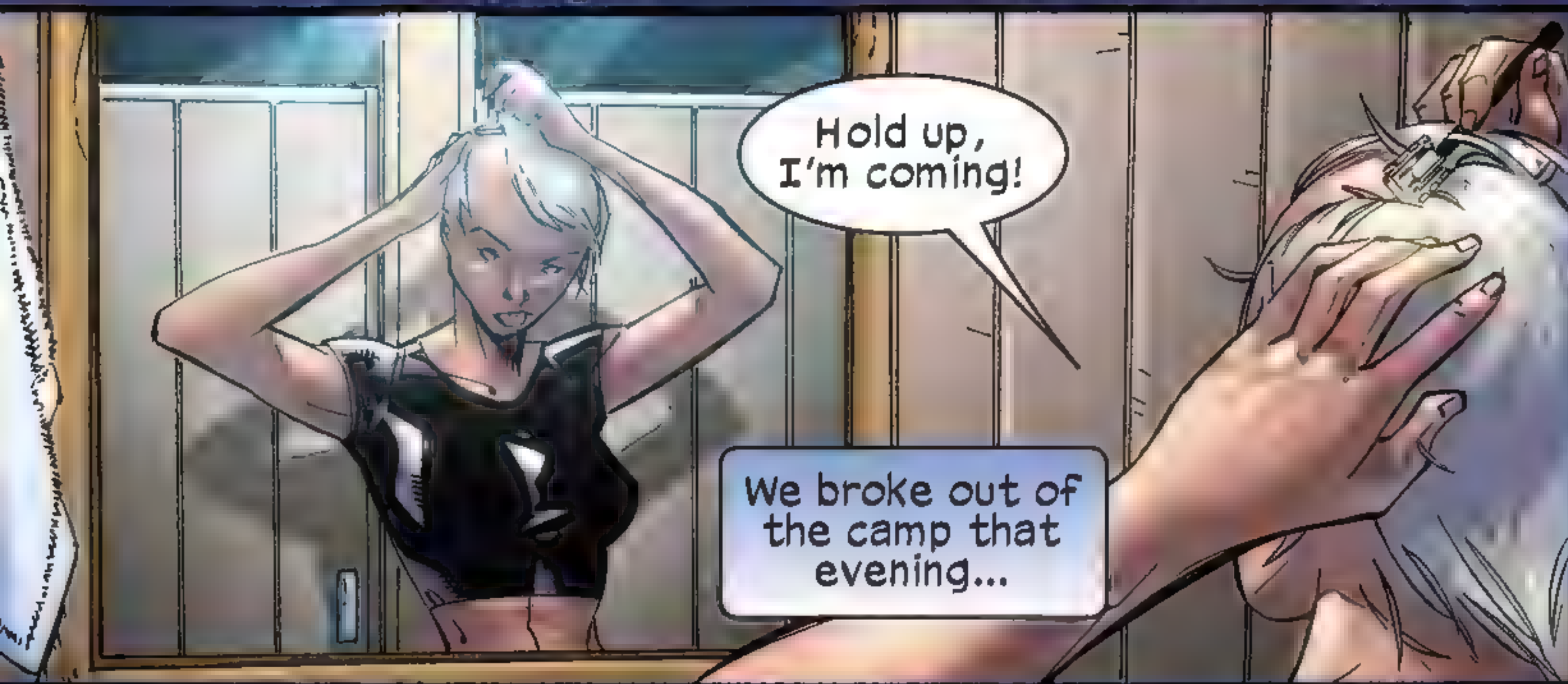
Show me  
I'm wrong,  
Ororo.

Prove to  
me the X-Men  
can't pull  
this off.

Sam has this  
way in under  
my skin. It's  
total schoolyard  
tactics, but it  
works on me.

I felt charged,  
empowered.  
Ready.



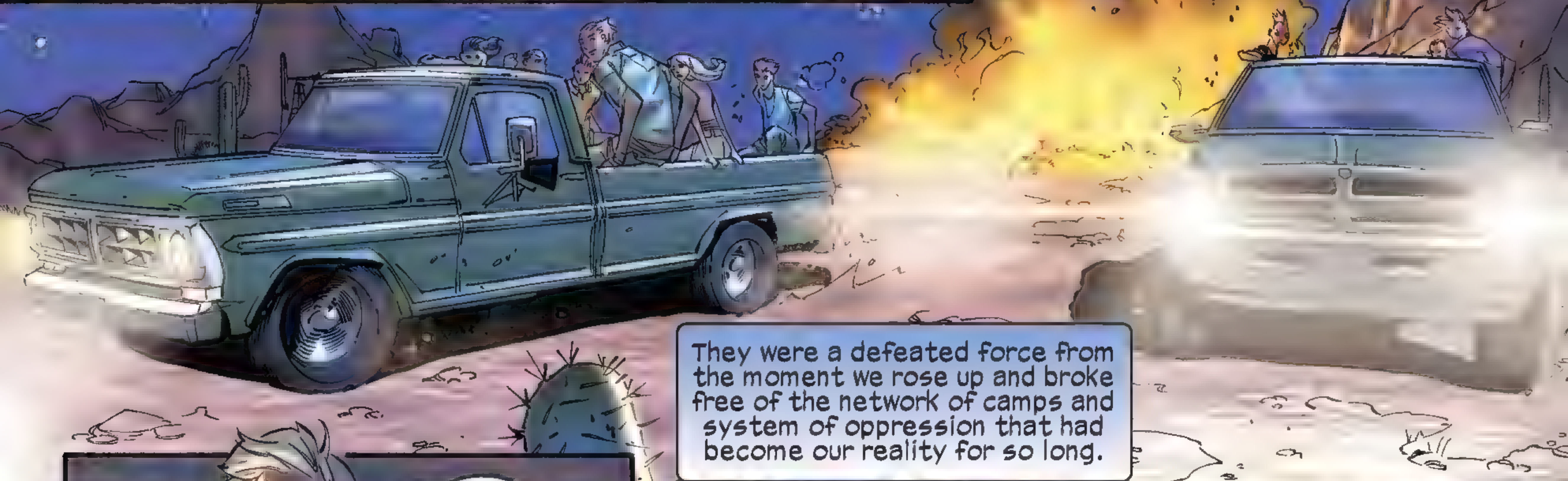


Hold up,  
I'm coming!

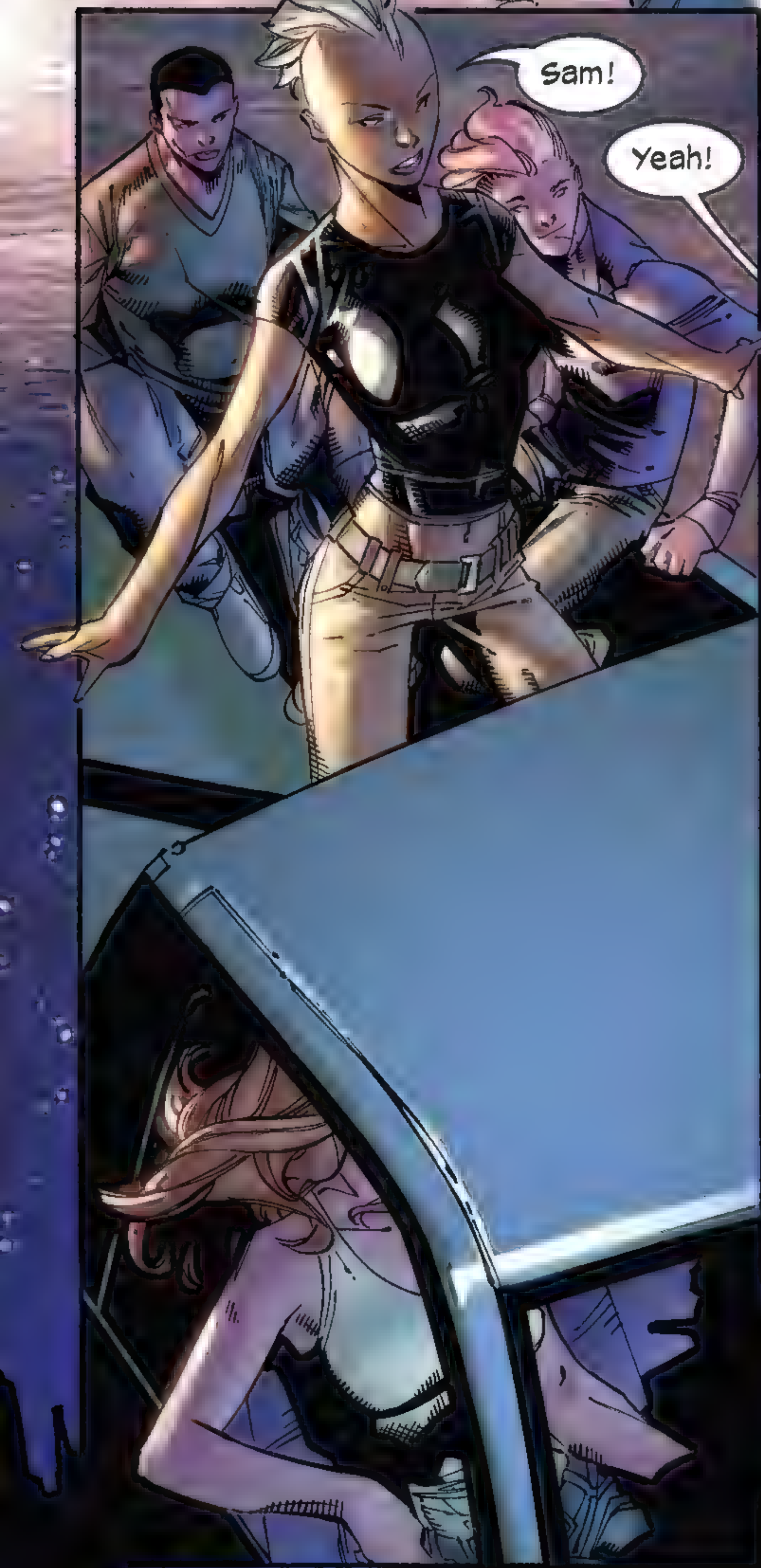
We broke out of  
the camp that  
evening...

...which was surprisingly easy  
when a bunch of mutants  
stop feeling like victims  
and believe they can do it.

The mutants appeared in the  
dozens, in the *hundreds*, and  
William Stryker's sentinel  
army was no match.



They were a defeated force from  
the moment we rose up and broke  
free of the network of camps and  
system of oppression that had  
become our reality for so long.



Sam!

Yeah!



Thank  
you!

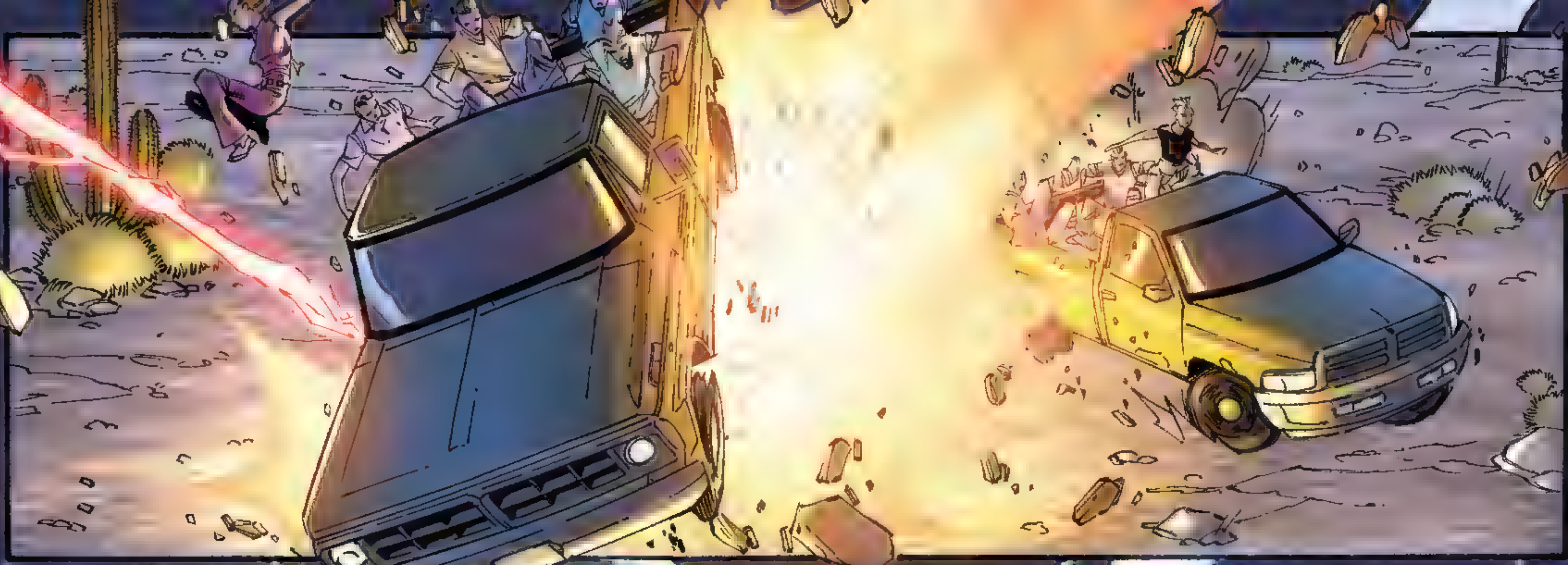
You  
know it!

**LIBERATION.**

**THE BATTLE FOR  
MUTANT FREEDOM.**







I'd lived with the words of Stacey X in my head for weeks. Now it was the manifesto of Kitty Pryde, speaking not of murder and revenge, but *mutant self-determination*.

I could burst from pride.

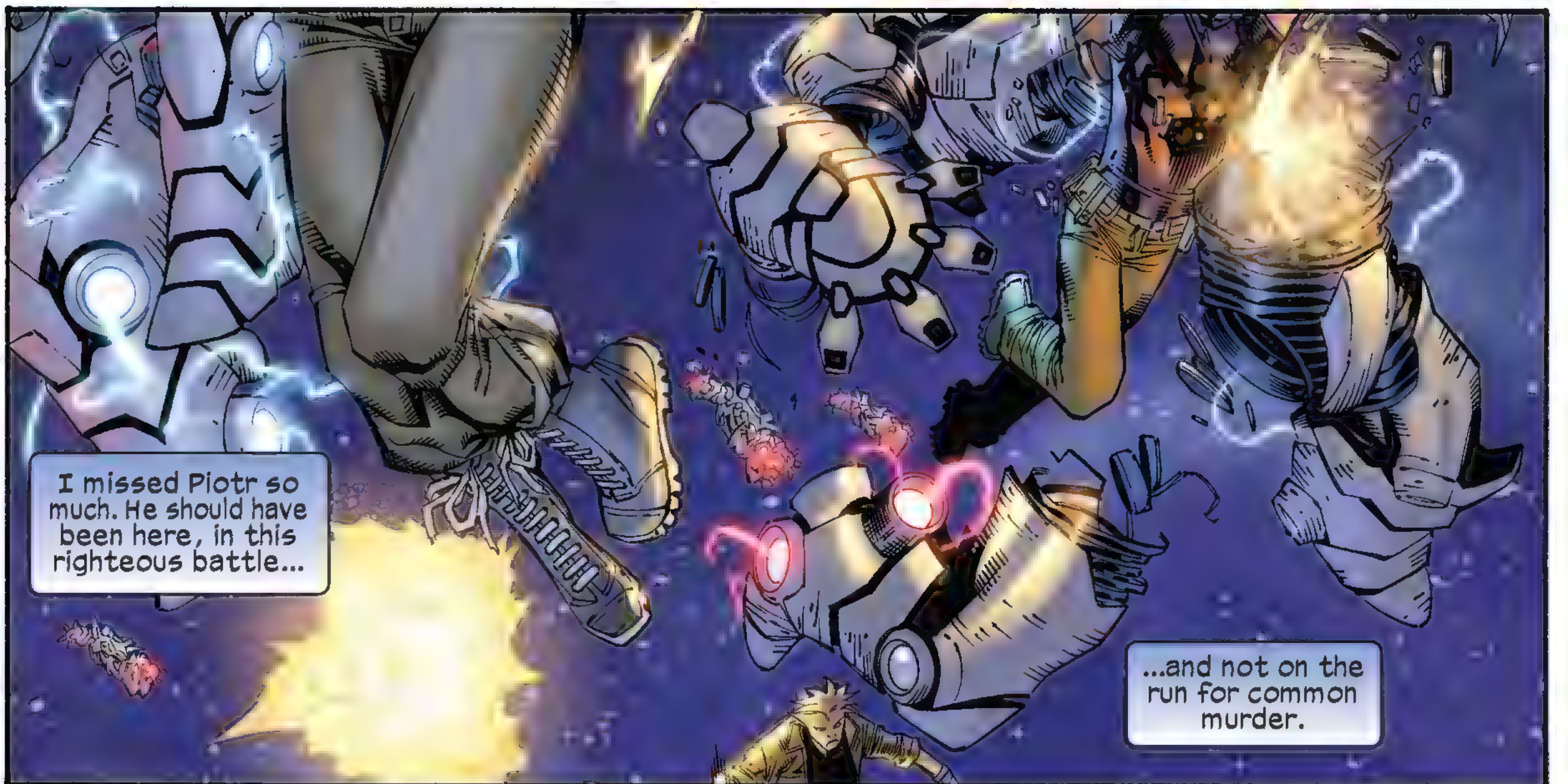
The mutants appeared in the dozens, in the hundreds, and the Sentinels were no match for us. They were a defeated force from the get-go, it was like our victory was a given.

And maybe it was. This was our time.





We were a community. This was a common effort. We were fighting for our future, a shared dream of freedom and equality. Of the right to live.



I missed Piotr so much. He should have been here, in this righteous battle...

...and not on the run for common murder.

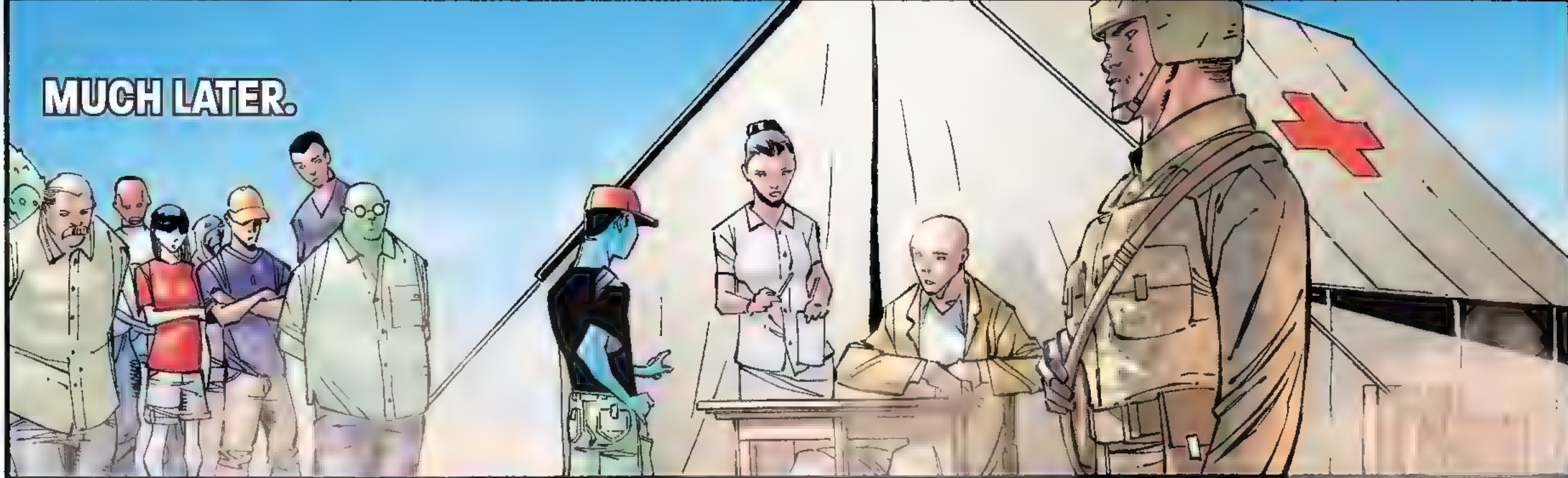


The mutants won that day, and even though in the days that followed, we would lose an even greater battle as the government unveiled its "cure," in this one historic moment...

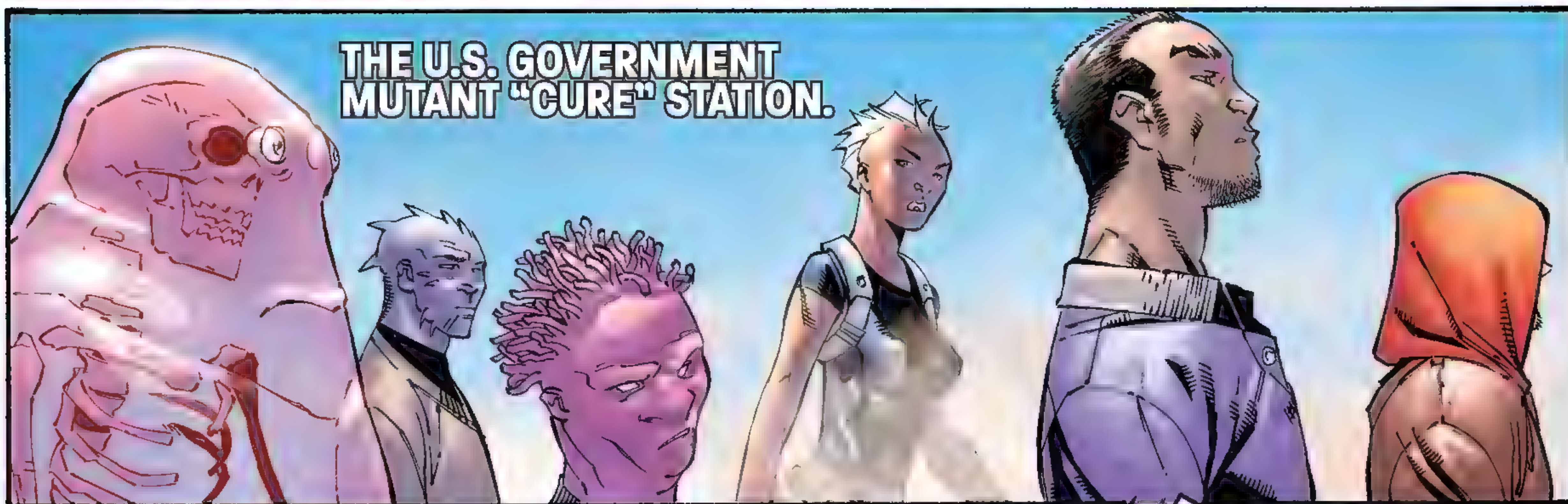
...we were united.  
We were X-Men.



MUCH LATER.



THE U.S. GOVERNMENT  
MUTANT "CURE" STATION.



What do you  
need, miss?

I'm  
looking for  
a friend.

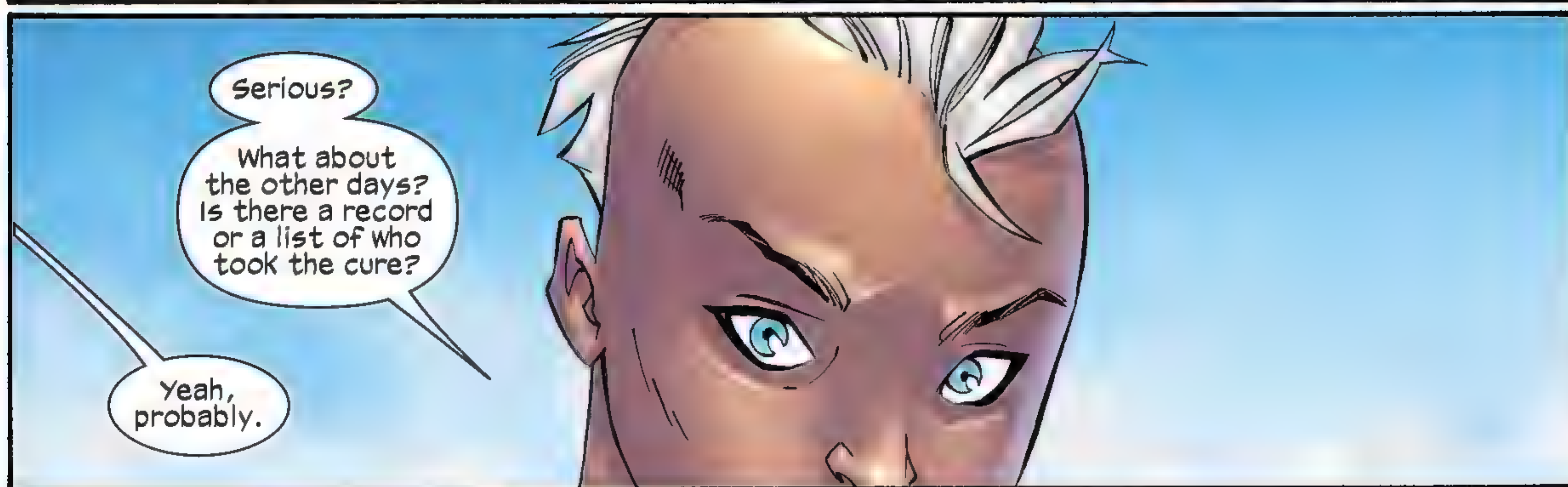
Well, if  
they're not  
here now, they  
never will be. This  
is the last batch.  
We're pulling out  
this evening.



Serious?

What about  
the other days?  
Is there a record  
or a list of who  
took the cure?

Yeah,  
probably.

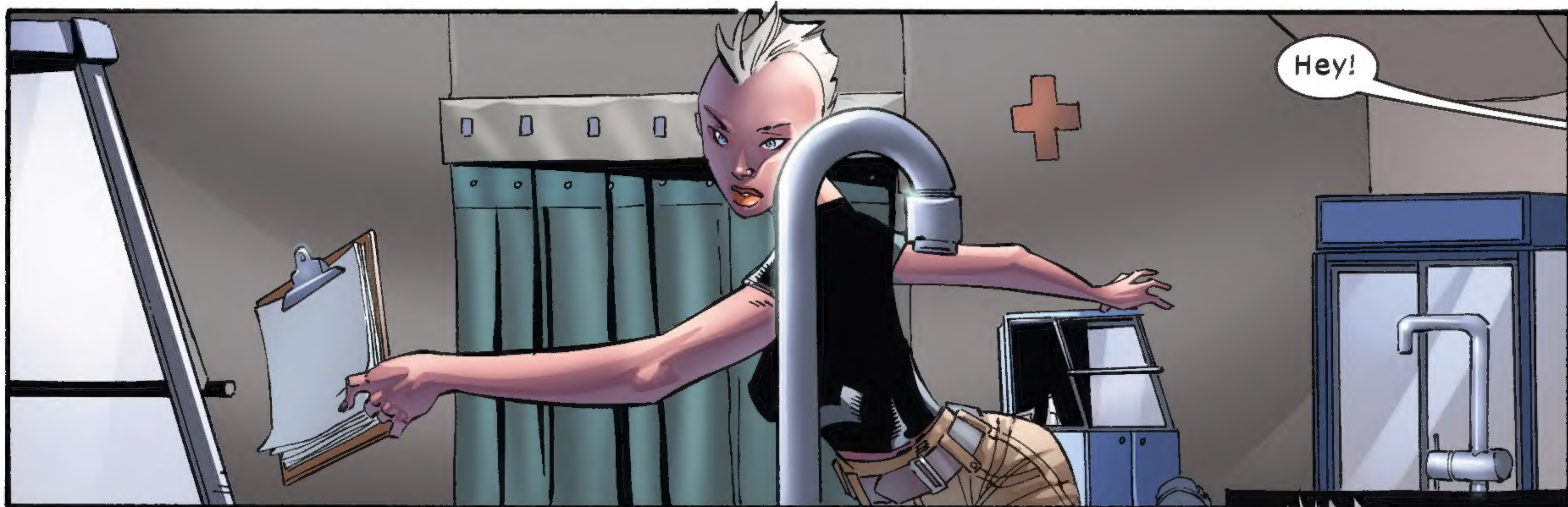
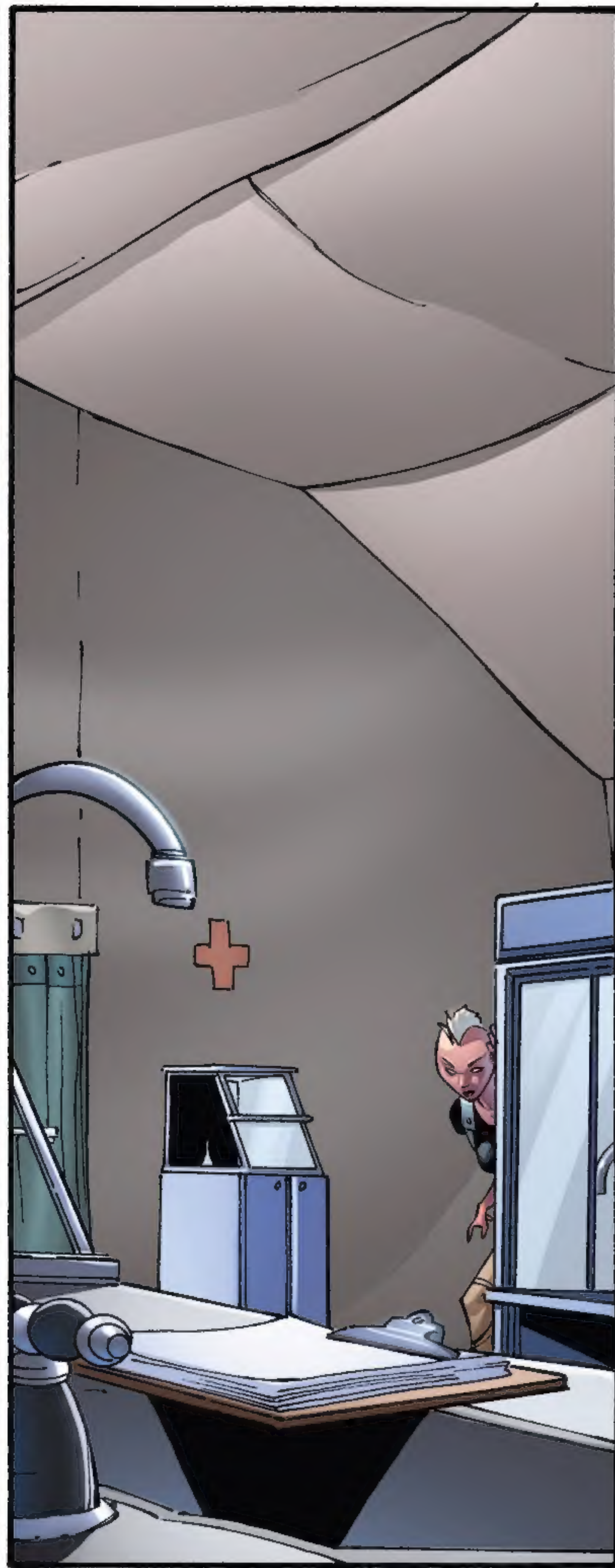


Good luck  
getting access  
to it, though.

...







C'mon...  
c'mon...where's  
the R's...

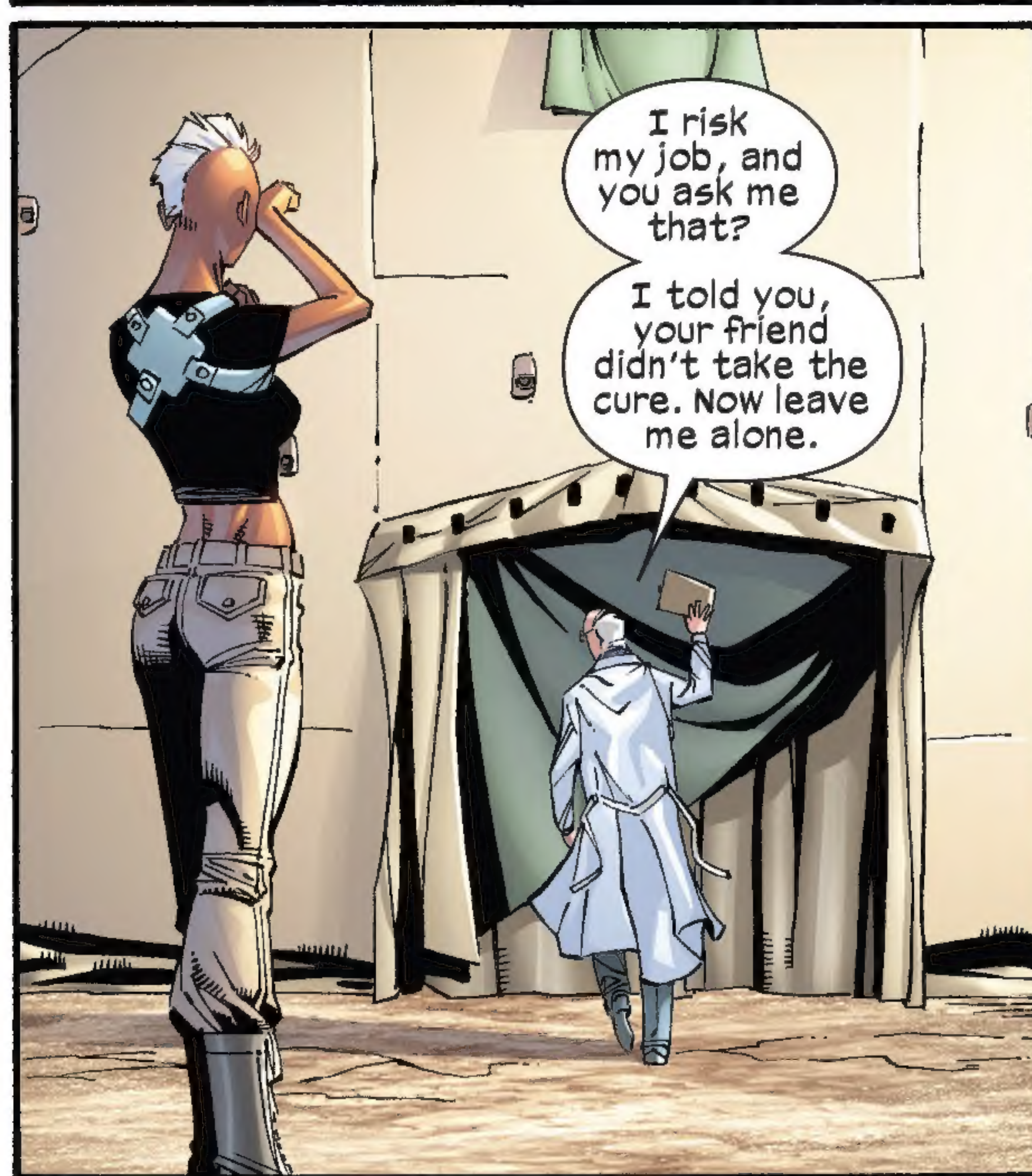
Stop! That  
is confidential  
government  
property!

Give it  
back!

No! No,  
please!

Just one  
name...



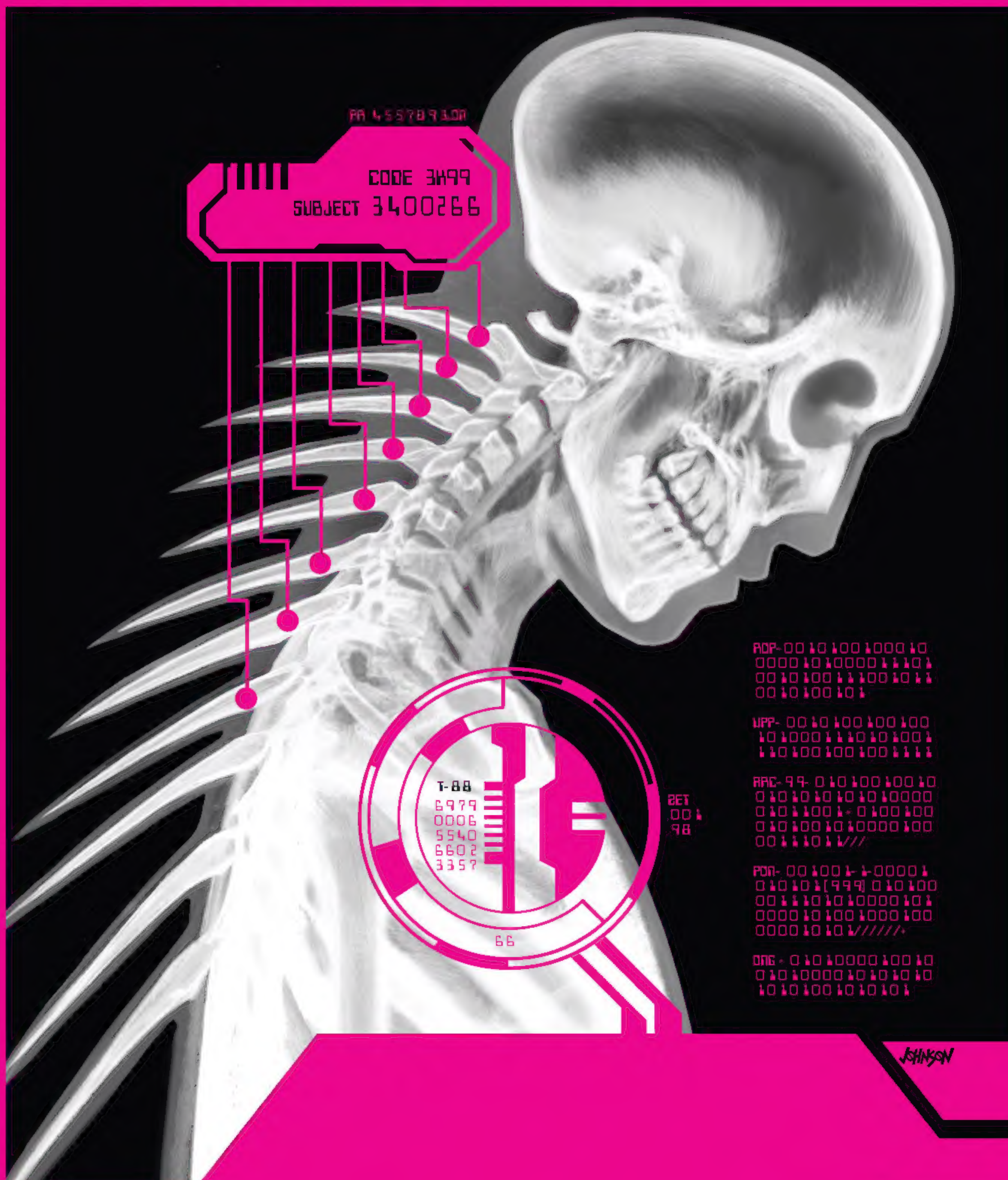








# NEXT:



MUTANT GENOME  
RNR-44603  
RRO

GR LEVELS 9460-5930000  
H-NN LEVELS 88593

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